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## **Senate passes upgraded graduation-requirement plan**

**LANSING** — “The *status quo* in education will not stand in the way of our students’ futures. Today the Michigan Senate approved legislation that puts Michigan at the forefront of efforts to create rigorous statewide high-school graduation requirements,” said Sen. Bruce Patterson, 7<sup>th</sup> District. “Michigan’s lack of graduation requirements is a major reason the state is among the worst in the nation in terms of job growth and unemployment.

“In our new economy, the old approach to education won’t cut it. This legislation will make our high-school curriculum a better preparation for students to meet the competitive demands of the marketplace as well as higher education.”

Senate Bill 1124 will require students to take four years, or equivalent credit, of English and math; three of science and social studies; and one year of an arts course as well as a health and physical-education course. Additionally, students will have to take biology, geometry and Algebra I and II, among other specific course requirements. These requirements can be fulfilled through technical and vocational training courses.

Patterson hosted the Senate Education Committee when it traveled recently to Brownstown Township to hear from local parents, educators and others.

“We all know Michigan has to find a way to attract businesses and new firms to the state,” Patterson said. “A key to that goal is producing a highly educated workforce, ready for the challenges that await them in the working world.”

In addition to the meeting in the 7<sup>th</sup> District, the Senate Education Committee convened hearings across the state to hear from local legislators, logging almost 3,000 miles in travel. At the hearings, lawmakers listened to more than 24 hours of testimony from more than 200 people.

The Michigan House of Representatives has offered an alternative graduation-requirements proposal. In one key difference from the House plan, senators backed a two-year foreign-language requirement that could be fulfilled anytime between kindergarten and graduation.

Lawmakers now will begin working out the differences between the Senate and House versions of the plan.

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